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# Shopping for a cause: Why framing ads properly in Cause-Related Marketing campaigns is essential

Editorial Staff

*Division of Research, Wayne State University*

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# Shopping for a cause

Why framing ads properly in Cause-Related Marketing campaigns is essential

Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) has been a marketing staple since the concept was first introduced in the late 1970s. Through CRM, consumers associate brands with a relevant cause that lends an additional nuance of differentiation to a brand in a competitive market. Part of this differentiation is that during the critical purchase decision process, CRM transforms consumers into proactive partners with the brand in addressing the cause involved.

A study in Wayne State University's School of Business Administration led by Andrea Tangari, Ph.D., assistant professor of marketing and supply chain management, says that the manner in which CRM messages in advertisements are framed – and how consumers feel about the short- and long-term benefits of those messages – can influence consumers' behaviors in their purchase decisions.

In the study "The Moderating Influence of Consumers' Temporal Orientation on the Framing of Societal Needs and Corporate Responses in Cause-Related Marketing Campaigns," Tangari examined how consumers responded toward temporally-framed messages promoting CRM campaigns based on consumers' preferences of making a near-term impact versus a long-term future impact with the cause.

"We examined two groups of consumers – one that is more future-oriented and the other that is more present-oriented – and how they felt about a product that supported a cause that will have an immediate implication on the chosen cause versus five years down the road," said Tangari. "In addition, we chose a cause that is familiar to many."

Tangari and her team conducted two experiments. In the first experiment, 179

participants were categorized as present-oriented or future-oriented. They then were shown two versions of an advertisement promoting a nutritional supplement with 50 percent of the proceeds going to the American Heart Association. The advertisements had different impact options: One would raise enough money in one month for the association to begin a heart disease prevention program; the other would raise enough money in five years to make a difference. Overall, present-oriented participants had a more positive attitude when they could make a difference in one month versus five years. Future-oriented participants appreciated both the long- and short-term campaigns.

In the second experiment, four different versions of an advertisement were created. The advertisements described when the benefit could happen, when the company could respond to the need, and what the timeframe of the need was. The ad described that all federal funding for the cited research area associated with the cause would end in one month or five years, and the ad stated that participants could help make a difference within one month or five years.

"In this second experiment, we found that when both the need and the response were presented as taking place in the future, future-oriented consumers had higher purchase intentions compared to present-oriented consumers," said Tangari. "When the need was far-off, but the company's ability to respond to the need was close, the present-oriented respondents had more favorable evaluations of the product than future-oriented people. This shows that more present-oriented people care more about the immediate

response." In addition, Tangari said that when both the need and response were near, there was no difference between the two types of consumers. When there was a proximal need and a distal response, consumers didn't respond very quickly and were not easily persuaded.

Tangari said that overall for these types of campaigns, if the benefits can be framed for near-term versus long-term, all consumers will feel more positive about making a purchase because they feel they are making a difference much more quickly.

Tangari's study was published in the *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 39 (Summer 2010), pp. 35 to 50.



## About Dr. Andrea Tangari:

Dr. Tangari received a B.S. in marketing from Indiana University, Bloomington, and an M.B.A. and Ph.D. in marketing from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. She joined Wayne

State University in 2010.

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